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CLERGYMAN and his PARISHIONER.

By **THOMAS BULL**, B. D. late Rector
of Swarkston in Derbyshire, and sometime Fellow of
Jesus College Cambridge;

And Author of the
EXPLICATION of the Church Catechism

L O N D O N.

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T O T H E
R E A D E R.



Serious Christian, who shall consider the Complexion of the Times, will be struck with Amazement and Grief, when he observes the prodigious Defection from the Religion of Christ, which has spread through all Orders and Degrees of People. The Plague is begun and propagated! And how does the dire Contagion prevail and rage! Yet more; his Trouble and Horror will encrease, when he beholds the Languor, the Coldness, nay the Degeneracy of those, who still retain the nominal Profession of Christianity; but seem strangers to its Graces and Spirit. May we not well say, Should the Great Lord of the Quick and Dead NOW come, would he find Faith upon the Earth?

This sorrowful Scene so affected the honest Mind of the reverend and worthy Author of the
20 A 2 *following*

following Sheets (who now rests from his Labours) that he drew them up, with the View and Hope of reviving the dying Zeal of Christians; to enforce the Necessity of their diligent and constant Attendance upon the Ordinances of Christianity; to kindle Devotion in their Hearts, and excite in them a rational Affection for the publick Offices of the Church of England: That, so delighting in the Service and Worship of God, they may be persuaded to recommend their Profession by the Holiness and Exemplariness of their Lives, adorning the Doctrine of God their Saviour, and verifying that noble Motto of true Christians, Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus: That is, Christian Excellence consists not in talking curiously, but in living sublimely.

If this little Treatise can obtain such a Reception, as may render it useful to the promoting so great and good an End, we have our Wish, and the Readers and the World the Benefit.



THE

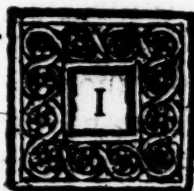


THE NECESSITY

Of frequenting the

Publick Worship of G o d.

Clergyman.



AM Glad, Sir, to meet you in this Place, so convenient for a private Conference, concerning your late Neglect of the Publick Worship, which has given me Uneasiness, of which I hope you will give me leave to discourse freely with you without Ceremony.

Parishioner. With all my Heart, Sir, whatever the Subject is; provided that I have the same Liberty to speak my Mind freely, however we may differ in our Sentiments.

Clerg. 'Tis no Favour to grant so reasonable a Request; but to the Business; Formerly there was
not

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not one in the Parish, who came more frequently and regularly to the House of God than your self; but for some time past, you have scarce ever appear'd there. I am the more surpriz'd at this Alteration for the worse, because you have too good an Understanding to be one of those Fools, who say in their Heart there is no God; and I have heard you speak of the Christian Religion, as one who believ'd its Truth and Importance.

Parish. The Proofs of a God are so over-powering, that I could almost as soon bring my self to a Disbelief of my own Being, as that of God; and the Christian Religion has the Advantage of so many concurring Arguments, that I am satisfied about its Truth in general, but may not think every thing a clear Part of that Religion, which you or others may call so.

Clerg. But, I hope, Sir, you do think as well as I, that Publick Worship is the Duty of every Christian.

Parish. Formerly indeed I thought so, but I have not the same Thoughts now, tho I am far from discouraging others from going to Church; but why may not a Man be a good Christian at Home? There I can offer up the same Prayers, which are offer'd up in the Church; there I can read the same Bible, which is read in the Church; and there, without the least personal Reflection, I can peruse as good and edifying Sermons as are preach'd in the Church. As a Man might be a Disciple of some eminent Philosopher, tho' he never assembled with other Disciples; so why cannot I be a Disciple of Christ, and obey his Will, tho'

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tho' I don't assemble with other Disciples in the House of God?

Clerg. Not, if it be the Will of Christ that his Disciples should assemble together on religious Accounts, and worship God after a publick manner.

Parish. But where in the Scriptures do we plainly find that this is the Will of Christ?

Clerg. I hope you will be convinc'd that this is undoubtedly his Will, when I have laid before you out of those holy Books many Particulars relating to this Subject. But before I consider the Reveal'd Law, I think I can shew by the Law of Reason, that you should frequent the publick Worship, tho' the Scriptures had been altogether silent on the Subject.

Parish. Let your Reason, I pray, be plain and conclusive.

Clerg. Before I mention it, give me leave to ask you one Question. Don't you think it both your Duty and Interest to pray to God through Christ, and to read the Scriptures and other good Books at home.

Parish. Yes, I think so, and practise accordingly, and others may take the same Method.

Clerg. From this, which you grant, it follows, that set Times for the solemn Performance of such holy Offices in publick are for the Benefit of Mankind. Now, as Men and Christians, we are to endeavour the Happiness temporal and eternal of others, and this by setting a good Example in frequenting the publick Worship; so that were it but merely for the sake of our Neighbour, we ought to do this, for the sake of the Church and State we are to take this Course.

Parish

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Parish. Let others take the same Course which I do at home, and so retain a lively Sense of the Obligations they are under as Members of the Church and State.

Clerg. You know human Nature and the Way of Mankind so well, as not to question that if it were not for the Practice of assembling together on religious Accounts, Multitudes would sink down into deplorable Ignorance, Carelessness, and Wickedness, who hereby retain a Sense of Virtue and Religion. Such is the Depravity of Mankind, that we cannot spare this excellent Means of Knowledge, and virtuous Practice. This Custom is too beneficial to be parted with. And if you and some others are all Spirit, and exalted already so near to Heaven, as to have no Benefit by this Method of serving God, yet you should be mindful of those who certainly are in the Body, and want this Help, and without it would be grossly negligent about such Duties as you exercise your self in at home; you should pity the Bulk of Mankind, and for their sakes at least should go to the House of God.

Parish. But you don't tell me, why Christianity may not continue in a flourishing Condition, tho' its Members should not assemble together, as well as this or that Sect of Philosophers.

Clerg. When the Scriptures are consider'd on this Subject, you your self may observe a Difference in several Instances. At present, I desire you to consider the Compass and Extent of Christianity, which not only contains many Doctrines to be assented to, but many Rules to be practis'd by very different sorts of People, every Relation

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we bear lays us under Obligations ; then consider the Temptations we are expos'd to from others, and from our selves, what Danger there is, that we should wander from these Rules, and should violate some of these sacred Obligations; consider these things, and you must be sensible that Christians stand in need of this Help, whatever Philosophers might do ; and if you can name any Sect of Philosophers in the same Circumstances, that Sect was not just to its Institution, if it slighted this Help.

Parish. I must take time to consider all you say on this Subject, and design fairly and impartially to turn over in my Mind this Reason for publick Worship. So pray proceed.

Clerg. When you turn this over in your mind, pray take also into your Consideration the Agreement in this particular of Men widely different in their Sentiments ; for example, the Practice of *Jews*, of *Mahometans*, and particularly of the *Quakers*, a Sect the most likely to stay always at home, and edify there by the Fire-side, under the Influences of the Spirit within them, and yet that Sect by their practice shew how sensible they are, that no sort of Religion can continue in a flourishing State and Condition, if its Members do not assemble together on religious Accounts.

Nay let me intreat you amidst these Thoughts to raise your Contemplation from Man to his Maker. Don't his most glorious Attributes, amazing Perfections, and divine Excellencies, deserve to be practis'd after the most excellent, the most reverential manner ? Don't the numberless Mercies of the great Sovereign of the World,

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and

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and his publick Benefits to the Sons of Men, challenge publick Acknowledgements, and the Praise of united Voices, and the most expressive Ways of shewing Honour ?

Parish. I will endeavour to give these Considerations their full Weight. Now I would willingly hear what you have to offer on this Subject out of the holy Scriptures.

Clerg. When to *Seth* the Son of *Adam* a Son nam'd *Enos* was born, in those very early times the Scriptures say, (a) *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.*

Parish. The bare Repetition of these Words will never convince me, who call upon the Name of the Lord at home, that I must necessarily do so in the Church.

Clerg. Before the Birth of *Enos* we can't question, but that Men call'd upon God in a private manner. Who can imagine, that our first Parents never worship'd their Maker till their Grandson was born ? Nay, we are expressly inform'd concerning their Sons *Cain* and *Abel*, that they offer'd Sacrifice, which is (b) *a devotional Rite*; but when Men began to multiply, then religious Worship was perform'd after a more publick Manner than it had been, or with more solemn and stated Rites. Some considerable Improvement was made concerning religious Offices, which deserv'd to be taken Notice of.

Parish. But you must acknowledge, that these Words have been otherwise interpreted.

(a) Gen. 4. 26.

(b) Gen. 4. 3, 4.

Clerg. I

Clerg. I own it, but withal Men, who have disagreed about the meaning of them, have agreed in this, that they relate to publick Worship. I have laid before you what I take to be the most plain and easy Sense of them, and a fair Enquirer after Truth will in any Controversy consider what is so.

The Name of God was thus call'd upon after the Flood, we have reason to believe, particularly at *Bethel*, which Word signifies God's House in the Days of *Jacob*. (a) That Patriarch in his Travels vow'd on certain Conditions, that the Stone which he had set up for a Pillar, and on the top of which he had pour'd Oil, should be God's House, and that of all that God should give him, he would surely give the tenth unto him. (b) Some Years after, God order'd *Jacob* to go to that place, and dwell there, and make there an Altar unto God that appear'd unto him, when he fled from the Face of *Esau* his Brother; and before he did so, he charg'd his Household, and all that were with him, to put away the strange Gods that were among them, and be clean, and change their Garments; and, said he, *let us arise, and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answer'd me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.* But why this Solemnity? Why these preparatory Rites, if they were not all of them to worship God there?

Parish. If publick Worship be of such Consequence as you represent it, 'tis strange to me, that there should not be more recorded of it, and

(a) Gen. 28. 18, 22.

(b) Gen. 35. 1, 2, &c.

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after a more exprefs manner, in the Book of *Genesis*, which mentions what Mankind did for above two thousand Years.

Clerg. But so briefly, that very many Transactions of moment must be omitted. From the Creation to the Flood was above sixteen hundred Years, yet how few things are recorded in that long Period of Time; whereas in our Days, what happens in one Reign furnishes Materials for Volumes. There is no mention of the Sabbath Day in this Book but in *Gen. 2. 2, 3.* Yet the Words there most naturally imply, that from that Day forward it was the Will of God the Sabbath Day should be kept holy, and by the way it was scarce in the Power of a Man, truly desirous to keep it holy, to be unmindful of publick Worship.

Yet publick Worship may be oftner refer'd to in that Book than you imagine. There is frequent mention of Altars (a) and they probably were Places of publick Worship. When *Abraham* had pitch'd his Tent near *Bethel*, he built there an Altar to *Jehovah*, and called on the name of the Lord, *Gen. 12. 8.*—And afterwards returning out of *Egypt*, to the place, where he had made that Altar, he called on the name of the Lord, *Gen. 13. 4.*—And his Son *Isaac*, when he had built an Altar at *Beersheba*, where he pitch'd his Tent, called also on the name of the Lord, *Gen. 26. 25.*—The Form of Speech us'd, *Gen. 4. 26.* and before taken notice of. The Grove which *Abra-*

(a) *Gen. 8. 20---12. 7, 8.---13. 4, 18,---22. 9.---26. 25.---33. 20.---35. 7.---46. 1.*

ham planted at Beerſheba, had he not design'd it for a Place of religious Worship, agreeably to the Practice of Mankind in different Parts of the World (a.) Why should these Words be subjoin'd? (b) *And called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. And Abraham sojourn'd in the Philistines land many days.*

Parish. From the Method, which you have taken, I expect to hear something about the Jewish Dispensation.

Clerg. Under that Dispensation the Appointment of Places, in which to worship God publickly; of Times, on which so to worship him; and of Persons to officiate in holy Offices, and transact betwixt God and his People; all these are far from countenancing your Opinion.

Parish. Come to particulars, and then I shall be the better able to judge of the Force of your arguing.

Clerg. I begin with Places; and the following Texts of Holy Writ consider'd together, are so fully to our Purpose, that I need not seek for more. (c) *Let them make me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them, there I will meet with the children of Israel.* The Tabernacle was call'd

(a) *Lucos in agris habento.* Leg. 12. Tab. de relig. lex. 2. vi. Ainsw. in Gen. 21. 33. *nunquam est lucus sine religione* Serv. ad Virg. Æn. 1. 9. v. 3. *Nunc sacri fontis nemus, & delubra locantur*--- Judæis Juv. Sat. 3. v. 13. ---*The Ground on which the Altars stood, which were built by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was fenced or bounded, in Mr. Mede's Opinion* (Dis. 18. p. 69.) *with some Wall or other Enclosure, and shaded with Trees, after the manner of Proseuchas.* (b) Gen. 21. 33, 34. (c) Ex. 25. 8. Ex. 29. 43. See also Ex. 30. 36. Num. 17. 4.

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the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or of Meeting, because God there met with his People. (a) *Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come. In all places, where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* — If they who always stay'd at home enjoy'd the same Benefit with those who religiously went to such places as here mentioned, I know not how to make any Sense of such Expressions.

Parish. However don't forget to whom these Directions were given, and these Promises were made.

Clerg. As to Times: *Remember*, said the great Lawgiver, *the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.*

Parish. But he did not add — by then assembling together.

Clerg. The Jews, who should understand their Laws, mention religious assembling on that Day. (b) *Josephus*, one of their most famous Writers, expressly says, they were commanded to meet together that they might hear, and perfectly understand the Law. Nay the great Lawgiver himself elsewhere declaring, that the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of Rest, calls it (c) an *holy Convocation*. The same Word is translated *Assembly*, Numb. 10. 2. and *Assemblies*, Isai. 1. 13. Besides the Sabbath, mention is made, *Lev. 23.* of other Feasts, and they are styl'd Holy Convocations. A Day of Attonement is also appointed, on which

(a) Deut. 12. 5. Ex. 20. 24. (b) Vid. Jos. cont. App. l. 2, p. 1072. Phil. de vit. Mos. l. 3. p. 510. Pol. Synop. ad Ex. 20. 8. (c) Lev. 23. 3.

the Jews were enjoyn'd to afflict their Souls, (a) *And that day, said the Almighty, shall be an holy convocation unto you.* Be pleased also to observe, that as soon as he had thus commanded (b) *Ye shall keep my Sabbaths,* he immediately subjoin'd *and reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord.* And farther, (c) *Philo,* another Jewish Writer, long ago observ'd, that they who found the Man gathering Sticks on the Sabbath-day, brought him to the Ruler, with whom sat the Priests, all the Multitude standing by to hear.

Parish. Persons are next to be spoke to. I don't expect that you should endeavour to lay before me all that is recorded in the Old Testament concerning Jewish Priests and Levites. For my own sake, I shall excuse that Trouble. A few Passages, which you judge most to your purpose, will be sufficient.

Clerg. Sacrifices, which represent Prayers, were to be brought to the Priests, the Sons of *Aaron*, (d) who were to offer them on the Altar. And concerning the Levites God said (e) *I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron, and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an attonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.* Of *Levi* God bore Testimony, that he did (f) *turn many a-*

(a) Lev. 23. 27.

(b) Lev. 19. 30.---26. 2.

(c) Philo de vit. Mos. l. 3. p. 330. Num. 15. 32

(d) Lev. 1, &c. (e) Numb. 8. 19. (f) Mal.

2. 6, 7. vid. Lev. 10. 9, 10, 11.

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way from iniquity ; adding, *for the priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

Parish. But if publick Worship be of such consequence as you would have me think, it is an amazing thing to me, that the Jews for many Ages had but one Place for publick Worship, so that Multitudes had not an Opportunity to enjoy this great Blessing. They had only the Tabernacle, and then the Temple, till after the *Babylonish* Captivity, when Synagogues were erected.

Clerg. From the silence of the Scriptures about other Places, you can't certainly conclude, that there were no such. The Scriptures are silent about the paying of Tithes by the Jewish People, from *Joshua's* time to *Hezekiah's* ; but do you thence conclude, that none were paid ; and yet all their Priests such self-denying Men, that not one would open his Mouth in so affecting a Cause ? And do you think the Jews never kept the Year of Jubilee, because it is not mention'd that they did ? (a)

Parish. Yet in this Case had there been convenient Places for publick Worship through *Judea*, something methinks on some Occasion must have been said of them.

Clerg. This might be urg'd in the Instances I have given. But what if other Places also are occasionally mention'd ? We read of a Sanctuary of the Lord at *Shechem*, near to which was an Oak, or Oak-grove (b). *Mispeh*, *Bethel*, and *Gilgal*, are call'd sanctified Places by the *Seven-*

(a) Vid. Mede B. 4. p. 840.
Vid. Judg. 9. 6.

(b) Josh. 24. 26

ty (a). At the first of these Places on a solemn Occasion, the Children of *Israel* were gathered together *before the Lord* (b). Whither *Samuel* called the People together *unto the Lord* (c). This probably was the Place, to which, long after the Captivity, *Judas Maccabeus* and his Followers came, because in former time there had been a *Proseucha*, or Place of Prayer there (d). Concerning the second Place, you read of three Men going up to God to *Beethel* (e), and soon after the *hill of God* is mention'd, and a Company of Prophets coming down from the *high place* with a Psaltery, and a Tabret, and a Pipe, and an Harp before them (f).

You read of Prophets, and Sons of the Prophets (g). These, according to (b) Mr. *Thorndike*, were the Men that minister'd the moral Service of God, of Prayers, and the Praises of God, and the Exposition of the Law, at their religious Assemblies, and most of them were Priests and Levites. When the distress'd *Shunamite* told her Husband, that she would go to the Prophet *Elisha*, he said, *Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither New-moon, nor Sabbath* (i).

I know Dr. *Prideaux* is, and deservedly, a favourite Author with you. He affirms that those who liv'd at a distance from the Tabernacle, whilst

(a) 1 Sam. 7. 16. (b) Judg. 20. 1. (c) 1 Sam. 10. 17. (d) 1 Macc. 3. 46. (e) 1 Sam. 10. 3. (f) 1 Sam. 10. 3, 5. See Mede B. 1. Dif. 18. (g) 1 Sam. 19. 20. 2 Kin. 2. 3, 5. (h) Thornd. of Rel. Af. c. 2. p. 21, 25. (i) 2 Kin. 4. 23.

that was in being, and afterwards from the Temple, not being able at all times to resort thither, built Courts like those in which they pray'd at the Tabernacle, and at the Temple, therein to offer their Prayers unto God, which in after-times we find call'd by the Name of *Proseucha* (a). He also thinks it probable, that these *Proseucha* were the same which in the Old Testament were call'd High Places, which were not always condemn'd in Scripture (b); but then only when they were made use of for idolatrous Worship, or in a schismatical Way (c). Besides these *Proseucha*, he says, there were other Places, to which the *Israelites*, before the Captivity, frequently assembled upon the account of Religion. For they often resorted to the Cities of the Levites, to be taught the Rites and Ceremonies of the Mosaical Law, and to the Schools of the Prophets for all other Instructions relating to the Things of God (d).

Parish. Since you are pleas'd to make great Use of Dr. *Prideaux*, give me leave to make Use of him in my turn. He affirms indeed, that there were *Proseucha*, or Houses of Prayer, before the Captivity amongst the Jews; but withal he affirms, that in those Houses of Prayer, Men pray'd as in the Temple, every one apart for himself (e).

Clerg. Suppose the Doctor right in this particular, he also affirms, that both at the Temple,

(a) Prid. Con. pt. 1. B. 6. p. 307. See Luk. 6. 12. Acts 16. 13. Pf. 52. 8. Juv. S. 3. v. 296.
 (b) 1 Sam. 9. 19. 10. 5, &c. (c) Prid. ib.
 (d) Prid. ib. p. 308. (e) Prid. ib. p. 307. v. p. 303.
 and

and every where else the Jews were very careful to offer up their Prayers at the same time that the daily Sacrifices were offered up, and the Incense burnt upon the Altar; because the Design of those *Sacerdotal Rites* were to make their Prayers acceptable in God's Presence (a.) So that the Argument is stronger in our case; for amongst us Priest and People are assembled in the same Place, and join in the same Words of Prayer.

Parish. But you acknowledge then that there were no Synagogues among the Jews till after the Captivity.

Clerg. Many learned Men will not acknowledge this (b). You your self have often read the Psalmists Complaint, *that all the synagogues of God in the land were burnt* (c). The Name of *Asaph* is prefix'd to that Psalm, and in *David's Days* there was a famous Man of that Name, (d) who might mourn prophetically; but if the Psalm refer'd to was wrote soon after the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, it declares the State of Things before that fatal Period of Time. However, I will own that the Complaints in this Psalm have been assign'd to a later Destruction than that by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and that whenever the Psalm was wrote, the Words translated, *All the Synagogues of God*, strictly render'd are, *All the Assemblies of God* (after the *Babylonish* captivity; when unquestionably there were Synagogues, and in them the Law and the Prophets were

(a) Prid. Connect. Pt. 1. B. 6. p. 304. vi. p. 303.

(b) See Mede B. 4. p. 839. Thorn. of Rel. Assem. c. 2. p. 31, 33. Pol. Synop. ad Pf. 74. 8. (c) Pf. 74. 8. (d) 1 Chron. 16. 7.

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every Week read to the People; pray observe that this is thought a great means of preserving the Jews from the Sin of Idolatry, into which they frequently fell before the Captivity (a). Observe also *Maimonides's* Words, *He that dwelleth in a city where there is a synagogue, and prayeth not there with the congregation, this is he that is called a bad neighbour* (b).

Parish. Enough, enough of Synagogues. Since you began to discourse about the Jewish Dispensation, I own that you have produc'd Texts of Scripture which might have confounded a Jew, who had only perform'd holy Offices at Home, but whatever you may think of me, I am a Christian, and we Christians are not under the Law, but under Grace. That People had many ceremonial Precepts, Injunctions which were Types and Shadows of good things to come, and vanish'd of course when the Gospel prevail'd. So that Arguments drawn from Jewish Precepts, and thrust upon Christians, are of no weight.

Clerg. That Dispensation abounded, it is true, in Ceremonies and Types, and we are not under the Law, but under Grace; yet we, who are under Grace, are Men still, and a Law may have a Foundation in the Nature of Men and of Things, tho' it have alterable Circumstantials; and we may thence learn what in the main is reasonable to be done, and may argue from the Likeness of Cases. The Civil Laws, which God gave the Jews, are

(a) See *Prid. Con. Pt. 1st. B. 6. p. 308.* *Thorn. of Rel. Assem. c. 3. p. 47, 48.* (b) *Vid. Thorn. ib. c. 6. p. 173.*

not obligatory just as they stand there, yet may give excellent Directions to Law-makers in different Countries.

Parish. I wish, Sir, you would remember that you are speaking to a Christian, who expects plain Gospel Proof on this Subject, and that you would come directly to that Proof.

Clerg. You shall not hinder me from mentioning some lively Expressions in the Book of Psalms, which, notwithstanding your Distinction of Dispensations, if you turn them over in your mind, may do you good, almost whether you will or not.

Parish. Let us hear these affecting Expressions.

Clerg. (a) *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?*

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept Holiday.

(b) *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart, and my flesh cryeth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thine house, they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a*

door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (c) *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*

Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good. (d) *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening Sacrifice*

(a) Ps. 42. 2, 4. (b) Ps. 84. 1, 2, 4, 10. (c) Ps. 122. 1, 9. (d) Ps. 141. 2.

Parish.

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Parish. And now I hope we are come to the New Testament.

Clerg. We are so. And if Christians were under no Obligation to join together in Holy Offices, would they so often in the New Testament be called by a Word, which in plain *English* is an Assembly.

Parish. What Word is that?

Clerg. Even the Word Church [*ἐκκλησία*] consult *Acts* 19. 39. Whilst the Town-clerk of *Ephesus* is endeavouring to satisfy the People, he says, if ye enquire any thing concerning other Matters, it shall be determin'd in a lawful Assembly, or Church [*ἐν τῇ ἐνόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ*] variety of *Lexicons* might be made use of, to shew that this is the sense of the Word Church [*ἐκκλησία*] but I shall only observe, that *Hesychius* uses three other words to give us the meaning of that word [*σύνθετος, συναγωγή, παήγυσις*] every one of which relates to People come together.

Parish. You know that I must here take your word, because I am not skilful in the *Greek* Language.

Clerg. I could not forgive my self, if I impos'd upon you. The *Greek* word [*ἐκκλησία*] very often mention'd in the New Testament, and translated Church, does signify an Assembly; and then judge you, if it would be singled out before any other word, to signify Christians, if Christians were never obliged to come together.

Parish. I will ingenuously own, it is unlikely: Yet you must own, that words may be us'd with great Latitude.

Clerg.

Clerg. The Appointment of Bishops and inferior Clergymen to officiate in the Church, shews that the Word is us'd in the New Testament agreeably to the Signification mention'd. Were it an indifferent thing whether any Christian came to publick religious Offices, would such Care be taken about Men to administer them?

Parish. When the World was to be converted to Christianity, it was necessary that there should be Men to convert Infidels, and plant this holy Religion. But how does it appear that from Age to Age in Christian Countries there should be Clergymen?

Clerg. That there were to be Clergymen in the Christian Church in all Ages appears, 1st, From our Saviour's Words to his Apostles, *Mat.* 28. 20: *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.* The Apostles themselves died long before the End of the World; but the Promise is fulfill'd in their Representatives and Successors. 2dly, From the Charge in the New Testament, particularly in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, given to Clergymen relating to Christian People. They are charg'd to take care of the *holy flock*, and to feed and govern the Church of God (a). And if in that Age of extraordinary Gifts and Graces, the Christian Flock stood in need of Pastors, who can question that they do so in these Days. 3dly, From the Charge given to Christian People relating to Clergymen, without the least Intimation that any one Christian had no concern in such a Charge. They are charg'd to know

(a) Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Pet. 5. 2.

them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Work's sake (a). To obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves, for they watch for their Souls, as they that must give Account (b); they were Christians of the twelve Tribes scattered abroad, to whom St. James thus wrote—*Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him (c).* 4thly, The Book of the *Revelation* was wrote long after our Lord's Ascension; in it, the Bishops of seven Churches are prais'd or disprais'd for their Care, or want of Care (d). We may add, that from the Apostles Days downwards there always have been Clergymen, and Practice illustrates Precept.

Parish. You stop short in quoting St James's Words, he speaks of a miraculous Gift then in the Church, the Sick who were anointed with Oil by the Presbyters were wonderfully recover'd to Health.

Clerg. It is not to be imagin'd that every sick Man, who sent for them, was so recovered, but every sick Man was order'd to send for them. I apprehend therefore that the Gift of Healing refer'd to, is subjoin'd as a Motive and Encouragement to send for the Elders, not exclusive of other Reasons.

Parish. But what Necessity can there be for Pastors and Teachers under the Gospel? Since it

(a) 1 Theff. 5. 12, 13. (b) Heb. 13. 17. (c) Jam. 5. 14. (d) Rev. ch. 2. and ch. 3.

is declar'd, that under this Dispensation God will put his Laws into Mens Minds, and write them in their Hearts—and *they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know him from the least to the greatest (a)*. They who have such a Teacher, have no Occasion for human Pastors and Teachers.

Clerg. Scripture must be compar'd with Scripture. The true Sense of one Passage is often known by considering it in conjunction with many other Texts. Follow that Method in this Case, and from this Declaration of the New Covenant, you will conclude, that there is great inward Help and Assistance under the Gospel, it is justly and highly preferable to the Law, and the Preference is express'd in figurative Language, yet there is not such inward Assistance as excludes outward Teaching, and Exhortation, and other Helps. The Author to the *Hebrews*, who intentions this Promise, speaks, as we have observ'd, of Obedience to those who watch'd over the Souls of Christians; nay, he thus address'd himself to Christians in general — *exhort one another daily while it is called, to day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin (b)*. So that he thought a Man under the New Covenant might teach his Neighbour. And St. Paul, well acquainted with the Words of *Jeremiah*, charg'd *Timothy* in the most solemn Manner, *preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season, to reprove, re-*

(a) Jer. 31. 33, 34. Heb. 8. 10, 11. (b) Heb. 3. 13.

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make, exhort, with all long suffering and Doctrine (c). Isaiah and Micah foretold, that in the last Days—many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways (d). You acknowledge, that there were to be Teachers for the conversion of Men from Heathenism, yet these Words at first view seem as opposite to such teaching, as to the continuance of Teachers in the Christian Church. After your way of arguing from them, a Man might argue against your commendable Custom of reading good Books at home; but what has been said, and will be said on the Subject, may help to explain and limit these Words.

Parish. Proceed therefore to another Particular.

Clerg. Our Saviour by appointing the Sacrament of his Body and Blood to be administered from Age to Age, has enjoined Christians to assemble together; for this sacred Rite is to continue till he comes to Judgment (e), and is a solemn Act of Communion.

Parish. But can't I use the Bread and Wine my self at home, and so be Partaker of my Lord's Body and Blood.

Clerg. I charitably believe, that you talk thus extravagantly, that you may be the better able to confute such wild Notions. All the Apostles were assembled with our Lord celebrating the Passover, when this Sacrament was appointed.

(c) 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. (d) Isa. 2. 2, 3. Micah 4. 1, 2. (e) 1 Cor. 11. 26.

The Disciples came together to break Bread on the first Day of the Week (*f*). The *Corinthians* came together into one place on this great Occasion, and when some demeaned themselves very irreverently, St. Paul ask'd them, *if they had not houses to eat and to drink in?* And amongst other Directions about their future Conduct, order'd them to *tarry one for another* (*g*). He call'd the Cup of Blessing the Communion of Christ's Blood, and the Bread the Communion of his Body; subjoining these remarkable Words—*For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar* (*h*)? This Sacrament is represented as a most solemn and publick Rite of the Christian Church, and since Men were set apart to dispense the Mysteries of the Gospel, who can doubt that this sacred Mystery is to be dispens'd by such Men? St. Ignatius, who liv'd in the Apostles Days, wrote thus to the *Smyrneans*—*Let that be accounted a firm Eucharist, which is offer'd by the Bishop, or by him whom he appoints* (*i*). And Justin Martyr, who liv'd in the very next Age, giving an Account of publick Worship in the primitive Church, informs us, that the President consecrated the eucharistick Elements, that is, the Bread and Wine, and the Deacons distributed them to the faithful (*k*).

(*f*) Acts 20. 7. (*g*) 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, 22, 33.
 (*h*) 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17, 18. (*i*) Epist. ad Smyr.
 §. 8. (*k*) Apol. 1. p. 96. Ed. Thir.

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Parish. But in our Days Christians receive this Sacrament at home in a private manner.

Clerg. At home, this Sacrament in our Days, is to be administer'd only in Cases of Necessity, and then consecrated by God's Minister. In the primitive Times the Custom was to consecrate the Elements in the Church, and the Deacons carried them to the Sick.

Parish. St. Luke, I am sure, speaks of the Disciples *breaking bread from house to house* (1).

Clerg. When St. Luke wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*, the Princes of the World being Enemies to the Church, Christians were obliged to assemble for this and other holy Offices, as the State of those severe Times would allow of. We find them assembled (m) in an *upper room*. The very Word [*ὑπερώϊον*] which *Homer* makes use of, when he mentions a Place for most solemn Prayer and Offerings (n). The Passage you mention might very well have been translated—in the house, the same Words [*κατ' οἶκον*] are often so translated (o). It has been observ'd, that there were many Chambers adjoining to the Temple, call'd Houses, and that probably in one of these Houses, upper Rooms, or Chambers, the Disciples of Christ, when they had been worshipping in the Temple, received the Eucharist, which they would not then have been permitted to do in the Temple. *Epiphanius* says, that *Adrian* visiting *Jerusalem*, found the Temple demolish'd, except a few Houses, and the little Church of God, where the

(1) Acts 2. 46. (m) Acts 1. 13. (n) Hom. Od. l. 4. v. 760 & lib. 17. v. 49. (o) Rom. 16. 5. 1 Cor. 16. 19. Col. 4. 15. Philemon 2.

Disciples returning from the *Mount Olivet* went up to the upper Room (*p*). I shall only further take Notice, that these Words have been thought to relate to rich People's entertaining the poor liberally at their Houses (*q*).

Parish. Pray, Sir, did not the Master of the Family among the *Jews* consecrate the Passover, and at the close of the Feast distribute small Pieces of the finest Bread, and having first drank of the Grace-cup, deliver it to be handed about? The Lord's Supper is the Christian Passover, and Bread and Wine also are made use of under the Gospel-Dispensation. Why then has not a Christian Master of a Family as much Power as a Jewish one? And why need I go to the Church, and apply my self to the Priest upon this Account.

Clerg. When the Jewish Passover was instituted, the Jewish Priesthood was not appointed, neither was there either Tabernacle or Temple built. This Rite was spoken of as a private one. Every House was order'd to have a Lamb, unless the Household was too little, and in that Case two neighbouring Houses were to join (*r*); but the Lord's Supper under the Gospel is a publick Rite; and I hope you are a better Reasoner than to confound Things so different. After the Jews had a Temple, the Paschal Sacrifice was brought thither to be sanctified, it was offer'd on the Altar, and the Blood sprinkled, and Fat burnt by the Priest; when it had been brought to the Tem-

(*p*) See Med. B. 2. p. 322. Ham. on Acts 1. 13.
 (*q*) Annot. Assem. Divines. (*r*) Ex. 12. 3, 4.

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ple, then indeed it was roasted at a private House, and there eaten (s).

When you have consider'd some Passages of the Bible about the Passover, which I shall refer you to, you may be the more sensible of the Extravagancy of some Expressions about the Lord's Supper, which you may have met with. The great Lawgiver said—*Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee ; but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover* (t). I dare say you your self do not think, that the Master of every Family among the Jews was the sacrificing Priest in that Holy Place ; nor can you read the Account of two Passovers in the Days of those pious Princes *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*, but you must observe, that the People came to the House of the Lord at *Jerusalem* to keep the Passover, and that the Priests and Levites had a concern in it (u). And, tho' it may surprize you, so the Priests had also about the Bread and Wine us'd at the close of the Passover in the Judgment of an

(s) See Ainsworth on Exod. 12. 7. Mede B. 4. p. 826. Outr. de Sacrif. l. 1. c. 13. S. 10, 11. Grot. ad Matt. 26. 18. Pol. Synop. in Deut. 16. 5.

They kill not the Passover but in the Court, as the rest of the holy things : Yea, in the time when the High Places were permitted, they sacrificed not the Passover in a private High Place ; and who so offereth the Passover in a private High Place is beaten. Maimon. in *Korban Pesach* c. 1. S. 3. See Ainsf. on Deut. 16. 5. (t) Deut. 16. 5, 6. See Lev. 17. 4. and Deut. 12, 5, &c. (u) 2 Chron. c. 30, and c. 35.

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excellent Author. " They were the Minchah,
 " or Bread and Drink-Offerings of the Passover,
 " such as all other Sacrifices had annexed unto
 " them. And to what End else was the Law so
 " strict, that they should bring all their Sacrifices
 " and Offerings unto the Place which the Lord
 " should choose to put his Name there, but that
 " they might be sanctified and hallowed at the
 " Lord's Altar, before they feasted with them (x)?
 But however Bread and Wine were us'd at
 the Jewish Passover, the Sacrament of our
 Lord's Body and Blood is a most sacred and ve-
 nerable Rite under the Gospel-Dispensation. The
 ever-blessed Son of God has appointed that it
 should be so ; and if you be not cruel to your
 own Souls, you will rejoice to go to the House
 of God, that you may there eat of that Bread,
 and drink of that Cup.

Parish. What you have said about the Lord's
 Supper as a publick Gospel Rite, I shall consider,
 when Passages of Scripture concerning Admission
 into the Church by the other Sacrament, that of
 Baptism, and throwing out of the Church by Ex-
 communication, employ my Thoughts. If there-
 fore you have any Reason of a different kind to
 mention, I desire you to enter upon it.

Clerg. The gracious Declaration of our Savi-
 our—*Where two or three are gather'd together in
 my Name, there am I in the midst of them* (y),
 encourages us to go to the House of God, to
 join in holy Duties with our Christian Brethren.
 The God of Peace and Unity is delighted with

(x) Mede B. 4. p. 826. (y) S. Mat. 18. 20.

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the harmonious Agreement of his Worshippers (z). Ill does he deserve the Divine Presence, who will not take our Lord's own Method to enjoy it.

Parish. 'Tis a difficult thing to fix the Sense of these Words : They relate to what went before, which has afforded great Matter of Controversy among you Clergymen ; particularly, it is disputed whom our Lord called *the Church* in the 17th Verse, and what *binding* and *loosing* mean in the 18th.

Clerg. I acknowledge that there are Difficulties in the Context ; but whatever gave Occasion to our Lord's delivery of these Words, and to whatever Subject they particularly belong'd, the Assertion is general, the Expression full ; they must signify to us, that our blessed Master delights in the Unity of his Disciples, and would have them shew their Unity, by assembling together for holy Purposes. By the Rules of the Jewish Synagogue under Ten that were of full Age there could not be a Congregation, no part of the Divine Service could be perform'd (a). With this Custom in view, our Lord seems to have made this gracious Promise to Christian Worshippers, and to encourage them to come together, tho' the Number was very small, and not to doubt of his Presence, if it should be their Misfortune to have many such Neighbours as you are.

(z) ---- docuistis ---- concordiam simul junctam vinci omnino non posse, quicquid simul petitur a cunctis Deum, pacis pacificis exhibere --- Cypr. Epif. 60. p 141.
(a) Thorn. of Rel. Aff. c. 6. p. 171. Prid. Connec. Pt. 1. B. 6. p. 295.

Parish.

Parish. I wish no Christian ever meets with worse. But to the Text you mention'd, according to your Interpretation of it, I don't see but that Christians of all Sects and Denominations whatsoever, who gather together in their own way, are entitled to this Blessing.

Clerg. If it were so, they who go no whither, are not entitled to it; but to come together in Christ's Name, implies a serious Regard to Christ's Will, both as to Doctrines of Faith and Rules of Practice.; and the holy Jesus would have all his Followers influenc'd with a tender Regard for the Peace of the Christian Society, and averse to Schisms and Church-divisions.

Parish. Remarkable as you judge our Saviour's Words to be, those of his Apostle have come with greater Vehemence into my Mind, sometimes, when I have abstain'd from publick Worship—not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another (a).

Clerg. So remarkable are these Words, that had you not prevented me, they had soon, and most naturally follow'd those of our Lord, which I have laid before you. They are very extensive. Every one who calls himself a Christian, has a Concern with them, and is to take care that the Reproach may not justly be applied to him; he is to consider other Christians by this excellent and powerful Method *to provoke to love and to good*

(a) Heb. 10. 25.

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works. v. 24. I don't wonder, that this Language gall'd your Conscience, and pierc'd your very Soul ; but I wonder that it did not induce you to change your Course, and to come to the House of God, that you might have Peace of Mind. You might well tremble to think how forsaking publick Worship and Apostacy from the Lord of Glory are here join'd together.

Parish. I observ'd, that there was no particular Business mention'd for which they assembled together, and consider'd, that they who officiated in those times, were endow'd with Gifts, to which the Clergy of this Age are Strangers ; and the persecuting State of those Times might make that requisite which may not be so now.

Clerg. 'Tis pity that Men of Sense should not seek the Truth, but to hide themselves from it, and sometimes almost as inartificially as Children, who shut their own Eyes, that others may not find them out. The Business for which they were to assemble together, that is, Christians join with Christians, can't in the least be question'd, when the Expressions [*τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν αὐτῶν*] are consider'd with the Context and many Particulars about publick Worship, recorded in Scripture and primitive Writers. Nor have we good Grounds to conclude, that every Clergyman, even in the Apostolical Age, wrought Miracles, and was inspir'd after an extraordinary manner by the Holy Ghost ; but supposing they were, these things are not necessary to the Discharge of Sacerdotal Offices ; if so, they had never ceas'd ; and tho' from the Context alone we are sufficiently assur'd, that those

those were Times of Persecution, yet there are other Temptations, besides Persecution, which make it requisite for Christians to assemble together, as sad Experience proves. But your naming the persecuting State of those Times brings into my Mind, I thank you for it, a good Argument to my purpose.

Parish. What is that? For I don't know how I have deserv'd your Thanks.

Clerg. You can neither deny, that in the Apostolical Age, the Disciples of Christ assembled together for religious Worship, nor that they then expos'd themselves to great Dangers by so doing. Now they might have read the Scriptures and other holy Books at home, and spent time there, as, you say, you do, and that much more safely than by assembling together; and they must know what their Lord expected on this Account; so that had it been a Matter of Indifferency, it is but supposing the primitive Christians to have been in their Senses, to conclude, that then there would have been no assembling together on these Accounts; but the Fact is on the contrary Side, whence we may conclude, that these are Christian Duties. That they did so in their Circumstances, is an Argument why we should do so, who can with all safety go up to the House of the Lord.

Parish. They might judge it necessary to come together for the conveniency of Exhortation to Perseverance in those dangerous Times, but ours are not such.

Clerg. Then they would not have spent time in those dangerous Places in other holy Offices,

but, after that Exhortation, separated again. All Times are such dangerous Times, upon one Account or other, as to need Exhortation. Besides, Exhortations might have been written down, and perus'd at home by particular Persons.

Parish. One thing comes into my Mind relating to those primitive Times you glory in, which does not seem to favour your Cause. Heathens reproach'd Christians as a vile atheistical Race of Men, who had no Temples, Altars, nor Images; and the Christians as frankly own'd, that they had no Temples, nor Altars, as they did, that they had no Images, and glory'd in the Charge, and, instead of deploring the want of such outward pompous Things, spoke of divine Temples, Altars, and Images, the holy Bodies and Minds of true Christians (a). Such a Temple, and such an Altar I endeavour to have at home.

Clerg. A little Observation may set this Matter right. Christians had no Temples or Altars in the Heathen Sense, but they had Temples or Churches, Altars or Communion Tables, in the Christian Sense of such Words. A Temple in the Heathen Sense was a Place where an Idol was fix'd, and in which a God by Charms, or otherways, was inclos'd and confin'd (b). An Altar,

(a) Vid. Orig. con. Cel. l. 7. p. 373. l. 8. p. 390. Min. Fel. p. 91. 313. Ed. Var. 1672. Clem. Al. Str. 7. S. 5, 6, 7. Laet. Just. l. 2. c. 2. Med. B. 2. p. 334. Cave's Prim. Christ pt. 1. c. 6. p. 131, 143.
(b) Vid. Orig. contra Cel. l. 3. p. 131. l. 7. p. 374. Ed. Can. 1677. Med. B. 2. p. 336, 392.

was a Place before, upon, or above which the Idol stood (z). Such Temples and such Altars Christians detested; but they had sacred Places for publick Worship, call'd by Variety of Names (a); rarely indeed, I believe, call'd Temples, yet St. *Ignatius* uses the Word (b); and they had holy Tables or Altars for the Christian Sacrifice. It may be sufficient to assure you, that St. *Ignatius*, *Tertullian*, and St. *Cyprian* make use of the latter Expression (c). Mr. *Mede* has observ'd a Difference betwixt two Greek Words, which signify Altar [*Βωμὸς* and *Θυσιαστήριον*] the former a proper Name for Heathen Altars, the latter always us'd by ancient Greek Fathers for Christian Altars (d). The two Words are mention'd in one Verse, 1 *Mac.* 1. 59. and the one is translated *Idol Altar*, the other, *the Altar of God*.

Whilst the primitive Christians shew'd their Contempt of Heathen Temples, Altars, and Images, no wonder if they took occasion to apply such Expressions spiritually, and to praise a pure and holy Mind in a pure and holy Body, and yet never design'd to discountenance publick Christian Worship: Their Exhortations and their Practice guard against any such Misinterpretation of that Language, which you seem too much inclin'd

(z) Vid. Ex. 32. 5. 2 Chron. 34. 4. St. Cypr. Ep. 59. p. 139. Ed. Oxon. Med. B. 2. p. 391.
 (a) Med. B. 2. p. 336 and 392. (b) Ign. ad Magnes. S. 7. (c) Ign. ad Mag. S. 7. ad Phil. S. 4. ad Eph. S. 5. ad Trall. S. 7. Tert. de Orat. c. 10. 14. Cypr. Ep. 45. Ep. 59. p. 139. Ep. 65, &c. (d) Med. B. 2. 391.

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to. Compare them with themselves, and you will not be satisfied with your spiritual Temple and Altar at home, in opposition to religious Worship in the Church.

Parish. Since we are speaking of the ancient Fathers, I would willingly hear the Thoughts of two or three primitive ones indeed, on this Subject.

Clerg. St. Clement Bishop of Rome, thought to be the Man, whom St. Paul makes honourable mention of, *Phil.* 4. 3. (a), you will acknowledge a primitive Writer indeed; he, in an Epistle, which was anciently read in most Churches (b), says, we ought to do all the Duties in order, which the Lord hath commanded us at appointed Times. He hath commanded Offerings and Divine Services to be perform'd, and not to be perform'd by chance and disorderly, but at stated Times and Hours. He hath ordain'd by his supreme Will, where and by whom he would have them perform'd: That all things being piously done with good Will, they may be acceptable to him (c). St. Ignatius also, must be acknowledged a primitive Father, who says—Let no Man deceive himself; unless a Man be within the Altar, he is depriv'd of the Bread of God. For if the Prayer of one or two hath such Power, how much more powerful shall that of the Bishop and whole Church be? Be diligent therefore to come very often together to the praise [*ευχαριστία*]

(a) Euf. H. E. l. 3. p. 15. Wake's Prelim. Dis. to Genuine Ep. p. 6.

(b) Euf. H. E. l. 3. c. 16.

(c) Clem. 1 Epist. c. 40.

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and Glory of God. For when ye are often in the same Place, the Powers of Satan are destroyed, and his Mischief is dissolv'd by the Concord of your Faith. (a) *Tertullian* was not so ancient a Father as *St. Ignatius*, yet far from a Modern. —We, says he, come together to God, that we may sue with Prayers, as with an Host. This Violence is well pleasing to God (b).

Parish. Have you any more Arguments to urge on this Subject?

Clerg. You desire to be happy in a future State. Happy Beings, Angels and Saints are represented in holy Writ, as joining in God's Worship in Heaven (c); now methinks it is a natural way of Preparation to join so with the Church militant upon Earth.

To what I have already offer'd, I might add Laws of the Church and the State (d); and lay before you other Particulars; but I don't see the Necessity of so doing. For if you will seriously and impartially consider what I have offered, you will, I hope, change your Practice, and ten thousand Arguments must be lost on those who will not consider them.

Parish. Well, Sir, I promise you, that I will seriously consider whatever has been offer'd to my Thoughts, and do own, that already there appears so much in what has been offer'd, that you may entertain good Hopes of having my Compa-

(a) Ad Ephes. S. 5. 13.

(b) Apol. c. 39.

(c) Rev. 7. 9, &c.
Ecc. Tit. X.

(d) See Gibson's Cod. Jur.

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ny much oftner at Church, than of late you have had.

Clerg. I need not tell you, how much I shall be pleas'd. When you have begun well, and any particular Reason for Absence offers itself, pray examine it by your Conduct in worldly Affairs; observe how you contrive, when really you have a mind to go to such or such a Place; think what you do with Regard to the Profits or Pleasures of Life, and make a fair and honest Application. Were this done by all Degrees of Men from the highest to the lowest, many Reasons for staying at home would be discarded, and Hindrances remov'd. When you do come, I desire you to come early, and to join in all the holy Offices from Beginning to End, as the Church appoints. 'Tis one of the many Excellencies of our Liturgy, the Part allotted for the People, and a serious Conformity thereto, is a greater Help to Devotion than many may imagine, and in an Affair of such Consequence we have Need of all Helps.

Parish. When I do come, it is not my way to come late. But if there be some Prayers my Conscience will not give me leave to say *Amen* to, and three or four Supplications in the Litany, at which I have a mind to be silent, I hope I may do as a I have a mind, without Offence, follow my own Sentiments, and join in the rest of the holy Office.

Clerg. Your Meaning is plain enough. But in your Case, I think I need not use many Words. I have heard of Men whose Consciences would not suffer them to take the Oaths to the

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the Government, yet suffer'd them to join in publick Prayers relating to Governours; probably they thought, that for spiritual Blessings we pray for all Men, and for temporal Blessings we pray for no Man, but with Limitations, with Submission to God's Will, in Subordination to the common Good, and, in our Church's Language, as far as it is expedient for us; and with such Limitations, they could pray for those who were actually over them, and from whom, as Members of Society, they must receive some Advantage. Whatever were their Reasons, I shall not determine, whether this Practice was agreeable to their Principles. But on the other Side, They must have an unaccountable way of thinking, and a strange Sort of Conscience, who are satisfied to take the Oaths to the Government, which is your Case, and not satisfied to pray for it, which you intimate to be your Case too. Lay aside Prejudice, and I can safely trust a Man of your Sense with this easy Case of Conscience. And if you can bear your Part in all the holy Offices, you should conform to the Rules of the Church, and without Interruption do so.

Business calls me away, yet I must say a Word to you about your Family; by being careful of which, you may do much Good. Remember that Authority is a Talent; remember, who vouch'd for *Abraham*, that he would command his children and his household (a); and

(a) Gen. 18. 19.

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who

42 *The Necessity of Daily Attendance, &c.*

who vouch'd for himself and his, saying, *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord (b).*

I am glad, Sir, that I had this Opportunity to discourse with you, and hope that you do not take it amiss.

Parish. That I don't; you have done, Sir, what you ought to do. I thank you, that you did not forget a Parishioner, and heartily wish you well.

(a) Josh. 24. 15.

F I N I S.

4 AP 65





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